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Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 20 December 2013

[*on the report of the Second Committee (A/68/445)*]

68/234. Towards global partnerships: a principle-based approach to enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 55/215 of 21 December 2000, 56/76 of 11 December 2001, 58/129 of 19 December 2003, 60/215 of 22 December 2005, 62/211 of 19 December 2007, 64/223 of 21 December 2009 and 66/223 of 22 December 2011,

Recalling also the outcome documents of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012, entitled "The future we want",[1] and of the special event of the President of the General Assembly to follow up efforts made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, held on 25 September 2013,[2]

Recalling further the objectives formulated in the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[3] notably the Millennium Development Goals, and the reaffirmation they received in the 2005 World Summit Outcome,[4] and the outcome document of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals in 2010,[5] particularly in regard to developing partnerships through the provision of greater opportunities to the private sector, non-governmental organizations and civil society in general so as to enable them to contribute to the realization of the goals and programmes of the Organization, in particular in the pursuit of development and the eradication of poverty,

Underlining the fact that cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners, including the private sector, shall serve the purposes and principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations and shall be undertaken in

[1] Resolution 66/288, annex.
[2] Resolution 68/6.
[3] Resolution 55/2.
[4] Resolution 60/1
[5] Resolution 65/1.

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a manner that maintains and promotes the integrity, impartiality and independence of the Organization,

Welcoming the contribution of all relevant partners, including the private sector, non-governmental organizations, philanthropic organizations and civil society, which respect and support, as appropriate, the core values and principles of the United Nations, to the implementation of the outcomes of the United Nations conferences and summits and their reviews in the economic, social, environmental and related fields, as well as the realization of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals,

Emphasizing that cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners, in particular the private sector, can contribute to addressing the obstacles confronted by developing countries through responsible business practices, such as respecting the principles of the United Nations Global Compact and taking action, including by mobilizing the resources needed to finance their sustainable development, and to realizing the internationally agreed development goals in developing countries,

Welcoming the efforts and encouraging further efforts by all relevant partners, including the private sector, to engage as reliable and consistent partners in the development process and to take into account not only the economic and financial but also the developmental, social, human rights, gender and environmental implications of their undertakings, and, in general, towards implementing corporate social and environmental responsibility, that is, bringing such values and responsibilities to bear on their conduct and policies premised on profit incentives, in conformity with national laws and regulations,

Recalling that the 2005 World Summit welcomed the positive contributions of the private sector and civil society, including non-governmental organizations, foundations and academia, in the promotion and implementation of development and human rights programmes, and recalling also that the 2005 World Summit resolved to enhance the contribution of non-governmental organizations, civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders in national development efforts, as well as in the promotion of the global partnership for development, and encouraged public-private partnerships in a wide range of areas, with the aim of eradicating poverty and promoting full employment and social integration,

Recalling also the recommendation made by the Secretary-General in his report to the Human Rights Council[6] that the Guidelines on Cooperation between the United Nations and the Business Sector be updated to ensure their full alignment with the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights,

Recalling further that the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in 2012, acknowledged the roles and contributions of civil society, the scientific and technological community and non-governmental organizations, as well as other relevant international organizations, including international financial institutions and multilateral development banks, in advancing sustainable development,

Recalling that the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development also acknowledged that the implementation of sustainable development would depend on the active engagement of both the public and private sectors, and

[6] A/HRC/21/21 and Corr.1.

recognizing that the active participation of the private sector can contribute to the achievement of sustainable development,

Recalling also that the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development supported national regulatory and policy frameworks that enable business and industry to advance sustainable development initiatives, including the important tool of public-private partnerships,

Recognizing the contributions of all relevant partners, including the private sector, in fostering stability and supporting recovery by creating job opportunities, advancing economic development, as well as infrastructure development, and, as appropriate, contributing to trust, reconciliation and security,

Noting that the financial and economic crisis, inter alia, has demonstrated the need for values and principles in business, including for sustainable business practices, social protection floors and the promotion of full and productive employment and decent work for all,

Reaffirming the principles of sustainable development, and underlining the need for a global consensus on the key values and principles that will promote sustainable, fair, equitable and sustained economic development, and that corporate social and environmental responsibility are important elements of such a consensus,

Recognizing that a socially responsible private sector can contribute to the promotion of children's rights and education through relevant initiatives such as the Children's Rights and Business Principles and the Framework for Business Engagement in Education,

Recognizing also the progress achieved in the work of the United Nations on partnerships, notably in the framework of various United Nations organizations, agencies, funds, programmes, task forces, commissions and initiatives, and noting the establishment of partnerships at the field level entered into by various United Nations agencies, non-public partners and Member States, as well as multi-stakeholder partnerships,

Recognizing further the unique position of the United Nations as a builder of bridges among Member States and all stakeholders, and stressing that the inputs from other stakeholders should be given due consideration in the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda,

Recognizing the vital role that the United Nations Global Compact Office continues to play with regard to strengthening the capacity of the United Nations to partner strategically with the private sector, in accordance with its mandate from the General Assembly, to advance United Nations values and responsible business practices within the United Nations system and among the global business community,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General;[7]

2. *Stresses* that partnerships are voluntary and collaborative relationships between various parties, both public and non-public, in which all participants agree to work together to achieve a common purpose or undertake a specific task and, as mutually agreed, to share risks and responsibilities, resources and benefits;

[7] A/68/326.

3. *Also stresses* the importance of the contribution of voluntary partnerships to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, while reiterating that they are a complement to, but not intended to substitute for, the commitment made by Governments with a view to achieving those goals;

4. *Further stresses* that partnerships should be consistent with national laws and national development strategies and plans, as well as the priorities of countries where they are implemented, bearing in mind the relevant guidance provided by Governments;

5. *Emphasizes* the vital role played by Governments in promoting responsible business practices, including providing and ensuring enforcement of the necessary legal and regulatory frameworks in accordance with national legislation and development priorities, and invites them to continue to provide support to United Nations efforts to engage with the private sector, as appropriate;

6. *Recognizes* the vital role that the private sector plays in development, including through engaging in various partnership models and by generating decent employment and investment, giving access to and developing new technologies, offering technical vocational training activities and stimulating sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth, with due consideration for non-discrimination, gender equality and women's empowerment, while bearing in mind the need to ensure that their activities conform fully with the principle of national ownership of development strategies;

7. *Also recognizes* the importance of giving due consideration to the various contributions of all relevant stakeholders, including the private sector, to the intergovernmental process of elaborating the post-2015 development agenda, and in this regard takes note of the important role that the Global Compact Local Networks have played in gathering input from businesses on a post-2015 development framework and promoting poverty eradication and sustainable development through, inter alia, the exercise of corporate social responsibility;

8. *Welcomes* the intention of the Secretary-General to improve collaboration of the United Nations with all relevant partners, including the private sector, and to strengthen the capacities of the United Nations system, with a view to enhancing the results achieved through partnerships, and acknowledges the importance of continued consultations with Member States;

9. *Also welcomes* the commitment of the Secretary-General to continuing to retain the integrity and unique role of the United Nations Global Compact;

10. *Notes with appreciation* the initiatives of the Secretary-General, including the Sustainable Energy for All initiative, the Every Woman, Every Child initiative, the Global Education First Initiative, the Zero Hunger Challenge initiative and the Global Pulse initiative;

11. *Invites* the United Nations system, when considering partnerships, to seek to engage in a more coherent manner with private sector entities, including small and medium-sized enterprises, that support the core values of the United Nations, as reflected in the Charter and other relevant conventions and treaties, and that commit to the principles of the United Nations Global Compact by translating them into operational corporate policies, codes of conduct and management, monitoring and reporting systems;

12. *Encourages* the United Nations system to continue to develop, for those partnerships in which it participates, a common and systemic approach which places greater emphasis on transparency, coherence, impact, accountability and due diligence, without imposing undue rigidity in partnership agreements;

13. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in this regard, in collaboration with funds and programmes, specialized agencies and other relevant United Nations entities and mechanisms, as appropriate, to:

(*a*) Improve the Guidelines on Cooperation between the United Nations and the Business Sector, including from a gender perspective;

(*b*) Disclose the partners, contributions and matching funds for all relevant partnerships, including at the country level;

(*c*) Strengthen due diligence measures that can safeguard the reputation of the Organization and ensure confidence-building;

(*d*) Ensure that these elements are coherently reflected in relevant system-wide reports;

14. *Underlines*, in this context, the importance of integrity measures as taken and advocated by the United Nations Global Compact;

15. *Requests* the United Nations Global Compact to promote the Women's Empowerment Principles and to encourage the Global Compact Local Networks to create awareness of the many ways in which business can promote gender equality in the workplace, marketplace and community;

16. *Acknowledges* the importance of corporate sustainability reporting, encourages companies, where appropriate, especially publicly listed and large companies, to consider integrating sustainability information into their reporting cycle, encourages industry, interested Governments and relevant stakeholders, with the support of the United Nations system, as appropriate, to develop models for best practice and to facilitate action for the integration of sustainability reporting, taking into account experiences from already existing frameworks and paying particular attention to the needs of developing countries, including for capacity-building, and welcomes in this context the collaboration of the United Nations Global Compact with the Global Reporting Initiative and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development;

17. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to promote effective implementation of the Guidelines on Cooperation between the United Nations and the Business Sector;

18. *Encourages* the international community to strengthen global partnerships for the integration and implementation in partnerships of the Global Jobs Pact of the International Labour Organization and the call for action on youth employment, in accordance with national plans and priorities;

19. *Stresses* the importance of developing national strategies for the promotion of sustainable and productive entrepreneurial activities through partnerships, and encourages Governments to create a climate that is conducive to increasing the number of women entrepreneurs and the size of their businesses;

20. *Encourages* the private sector and the Global Compact Local Networks to join the United Nations Global Compact "Business for Peace" platform and to seek to maximize the beneficial contributions to peace and development while

minimizing the risks of negative impacts on both business and society in conflict-affected countries;

21. *Takes note with appreciation* of the convening of the annual United Nations Private Sector Forum, which, in 2013, focused on unique opportunities and challenges in Africa;

22. *Also takes note with appreciation* of the introduction of the private sector track at the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Istanbul, Turkey, from 9 to 13 May 2011;

23. *Further takes note with appreciation* of the Corporate Sustainability Forum, which was held during the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012;

24. *Recognizes* the work of the Global Compact Local Networks, as well as the importance of cooperation between the United Nations system at the local level and the Global Compact Local Networks, to support, as appropriate and in a manner complementary to existing networks, the coordination and application of global partnerships locally;

25. *Also recognizes* that the Global Compact Local Networks provide an avenue for diffusing United Nations values and principles and facilitating partnerships with business on a broad scale;

26. *Acknowledges* the establishment of the United Nations private sector focal points network, promoting greater coherence and capacity-building within the Organization on activities involving business and disseminating innovations in engagement across the system, as well as the holding of annual meetings of United Nations system private sector focal points, which remain important forums for the exchange of best practices, lessons learned and innovations in partnerships with the private sector;

27. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its seventieth session a concise report, in the most cost-efficient and effective manner, on the implementation of the present resolution and on specific progress, including from a gender perspective, on integrity measures, on transparency, on the strengthening of due diligence measures, on the improvement and implementation of the Guidelines on Cooperation between the United Nations and the Business Sector, on disclosure of partners, contributions and matching funds, including at the country level, and on the strengthening of the Global Compact Local Networks.

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